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How did Alexander the Great spread Hellenistic Culture?



Alexander the Great was the son of Philip II of Macedon, the king of the area known as Macedonia, who **conquered Athens** in the 300s BCE. While in control of Athens and several other Greek city states, Philip II was **assassinated**. His son, Alexander, became the king. During his brief thirty-two years of life, Alexander led an army of Greeks to conquer an area that stretched from **Athens** to **India** and included **Persia**, the **Middle East**, and **Egypt**.

Alexander set-up cities throughout his **empire** and modeled them after Greek cities and spread Greek culture throughout the region. As a result, **Hellenistic culture**, a blend of Greek, Persian, and Indian traditions was created.

Alexander died in 323 BCE of illness and his empire soon **crumbled**, but his cultural **legacy** lasted for centuries.

1. Who did Alexander the Great conquer?

2. What is Hellenistic culture?

3. Identify one way Alexander the Great spread Hellenistic culture?



Directions: Watch this video from Education Portal on “[Alexander the Great and the Birth of Hellenism](#),” then answer the questions below (Start at 2:45).

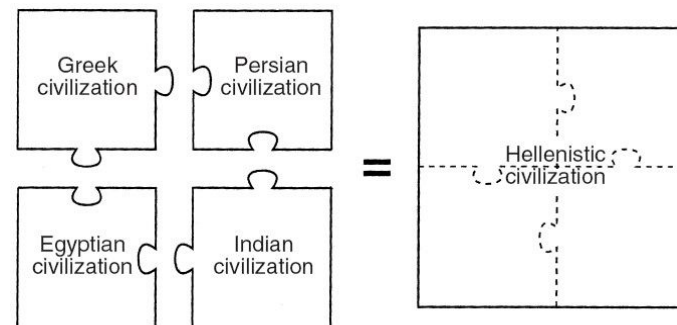
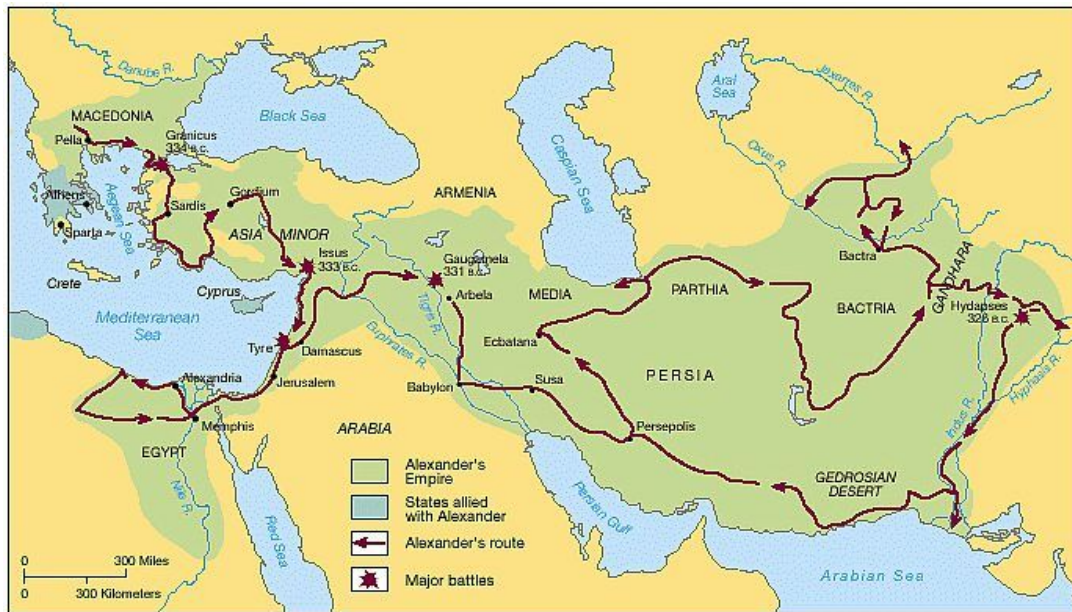
1. Why was Alexander so successful as a general and ruler?

2. How did Alexander unify his empire?

3. What happened to Alexander’s empire after his death?

The Spread of Hellenistic Culture

Alexander the Great's Empire



Source: *Guide to the Essentials of World History*, Prentice Hall, 1999 (adapted)

Hellenistic Culture- a **combination** of Greek, Persian, and Indian art, philosophy, science, math, architecture, and traditions that was created through contact between people ruled by Alexander the Great and spread by those that traveled in his empire

Cultural diffusion is not a one-way street, and that just as Alexander spread Hellenic culture to the areas he conquered, he was likewise influenced by the cultures of his conquered territories. As a result, ***cultural syncretism*** – the blending of two or more cultures – birthed the Hellenistic Age.

Observations What do you notice?	Questions What are you wondering about?	Summary What do you think about the effects of Alexander the Great's conquests on the culture of his empire?



A capital (top) of a Greek Corinthian pillar, from the *tholos* at Epidauros (Archaeological Museum of Epidauros)



Coin from Athens, 467-465 BC. Silver Dekadrachm (43.38 g). Head of the goddess Athena right, Back: AΘE (AΘHNAION - of Athenians), owl standing facing, wings spread; olive sprig and crescent to upper left



Silver coin depicting the Greco-Bactrian king Demetrius I (200-180 BC) wearing an elephant scalp, symbol of his conquest of India.
Back: Herakles (Hercules), holding a lion skin and a club resting over the arm. The text, written in Greek reads: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ - BASILEŌS DĒMĒTRIOU "of King Demetrius".



Statue of the Greek goddess Athena. Marble, Roman copy after a Greek original of the late 5th century BCE.



Heracles depiction of Vajrapani as the protector of the Buddha, 2nd century Gandhara, British Museum.



An Indo-Corinthian capital with the Buddha at its centre, 3-4th century, Gandhara.



One of the first representations of the Buddha, 1st-2nd century AD, Gandhara: Standing Buddha (Tokyo National Museum).

HELLENISTIC MATHEMATICS

By the 3rd Century BCE, in the wake of the conquests of Alexander the Great, mathematical breakthroughs were also beginning to be made on the edges of the Greek Hellenistic empire.

In particular, Alexandria in Egypt became a great centre of learning under the beneficent rule of the Ptolemies, and its famous Library soon gained a reputation to rival that of the Athenian Academy. The patrons of the Library were arguably the first professional scientists, paid for their devotion to research. Among the best known and most influential mathematicians who studied and taught at Alexandria were Euclid, Archimedes, Eratosthenes, Heron, Menelaus and Diophantus.

During the late 4th and early 3rd Century BCE, Euclid was the great chronicler of the mathematics of the time, and one of the most influential teachers in history. He virtually invented classical (Euclidean) geometry as we know it. Archimedes spent most of his life in Syracuse, Sicily, but also studied for a while in Alexandria. He is perhaps best known as an engineer and inventor but, in the light of recent discoveries, he is now considered of one of the greatest pure mathematicians of all time. Eratosthenes of Alexandria was a near contemporary of Archimedes in the 3rd Century BCE. A mathematician, astronomer and geographer, he devised the first system of latitude and longitude, and calculated the circumference of the earth to a remarkable degree of accuracy. As a mathematician, his greatest legacy is the “Sieve of Eratosthenes” algorithm for identifying prime numbers.

It is not known exactly when the great Library of Alexandria burned down, but Alexandria remained an important intellectual centre for some centuries.



Regents Multiple Choice Check for Understanding

Directions: Circle the choice that answers each question or complete the sentences below.

1. What was one effect of Alexander the Great's conquests?

1. expansion of Hellenistic culture
2. formation of the Christian church
3. decreased importance of the Silk Roads
4. increased support of the Mayan leaders

2. Alexander the Great's conquests of Greece, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Persia led to the

- (1) spread of Hellenic culture
- (2) adoption of a feudal system
- (3) establishment of representative democracy
- (4) spread of Islamic culture throughout Europe

Alexander the Great Formative Assessment Task

Task: Using your knowledge of global history, write a well-constructed paragraph in which you

- Define cultural diffusion.
- Explain how Alexander the Great's actions led to cultural diffusion in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and central Asia.

Be sure to add supporting details (note this is NOT a document based paragraph). Submit to www.turnitin.com by Tuesday, Nov 22 11 pm

Want Additional Resources? Check out
<http://semiramis-speaks.com/the-impact-of-alexander-the-greats-conquests/> or this video at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjT1hyfP5R4>